

Firearms and Suicide

*Death by firearms is the fastest growing method of suicide.
Firearms are used in more suicides than homicides.*

- 200 million guns are now in the hands of individual Americans, which is more than double the number held in 1969.
- In 1998, firearm suicide accounted for nearly 17,500 deaths in this country — almost 60 percent of all firearm deaths in this country — more than any other cause of firearm injury deaths.
- Firearms are now the most frequent method of suicide for men and women of all ages, including boys and girls aged 10 to 14 years.
- White males aged 85 years and over account for the highest rate for suicide by firearms.
- More than 90% of people who commit suicide with a firearm already have the gun in the house.
- Although most gun owners reportedly keep a firearm in their home for “protection” or “self-defense,” only 2% of gun-related deaths in the home are the result of a homeowner shooting an intruder; while 3% are accidental child shootings, 12% are the result of adult partners shooting one another, and 83% are the result of a suicide, often by someone other than the gun owner.
- Research shows that residents of homes where a gun is present are five times more likely to experience a suicide than residents of homes where there are no guns present.
- The **total** suicide rate is lower in states with stricter gun control laws, which indicates that only a limited number of suicidal people switch to an alternative method for suicide.
- The **availability** of guns in the home, independent of firearm type or method of storage, markedly increases the likelihood of suicide by a young person in such a home.

Restricting the availability of guns will prevent suicide as will using trigger locks.